



Dark & Light (Grades 5-6) Book List

If you enjoyed reading *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, you might want to dive into one of the following novels. These stories highlight protagonists who face life's challenges and find a way grow in the face of adversity.

Bud, Not Buddy

Christopher Paul Curtis

Random House Children's Books

Bud, a ten-year-old foster child, goes on a cross-state journey during the Great Depression era in search of his father. Based upon an old flyer, Bud thinks his father is a famous jazz bandleader. In his elusive quest, he learns more about himself than he does his father as he encounters setback after setback. Armed with a cardboard suitcase and an optimist attitude, Bud personifies perseverance and determination.

Where the Red Fern Grows

Wilson Rawls

Random House Children's Books

Best friends help you through the good times and the bad. Sometimes those best friends have four legs. Billy finds two such best friends when he raises two redbone coonhound hunting dogs. Together, they form an inseparable and unbeatable hunting team. Set in the Ozarks, *Where the Red Fern Grows*

Pictures of Hollis Woods

Patricia Giff

Random House Children's Books

Orphan Hollis Woods finally finds a home with elderly Josie, an eccentric artist. Yet when Josie becomes increasingly forgetful, Hollis, armed with her sketchbook and colored pencils, decides to take Josie away before social workers can take Hollis away. In a story interspersed with flashbacks about another caring foster family, the Regans, Hollis struggles to find the true meaning of home.

Al Capone Does My Shirts

(1st of two books)

Gennifer Choldenko

Penguin Group

Moose Flannagan doesn't quite know what to expect when his family moves to Alcatraz Island, where his father is to work. Set in the 1935, Moose hopes to catch glimpses of the island's more notorious residents, Al Capone and "Machine Gun Kelly." Yet it is there on Alcatraz that he learns more about himself and his autistic sister than he does the inmates.

Bridge to Terabithia

Katherine Paterson

HarperCollins

Jess Aarons doesn't expect to befriend Leslie Burke, the one person in fifth grade who beat him in a running competition. Yet sometimes one finds a best friend in the most unlikely peer, and in the most unlikely place. Building a magical world in the woods behind their houses brings Jess and Leslie together in a way that will change Jess forever. Yet their world is challenged when tragedy strikes.



Six Flags® READ to SUCCEED



Sarah, Plain and Tall

(1st of two books)

Patricia MacLachlan

HarperCollins

Caleb and Anna's world is changed one day when a stranger arrives by train. Sarah, a mail-order bride, comes to the prairie to live, but amidst the challenges of frontier life, the children wonder if she will stay.

Stargirl

(1st of two books)

Jerry Spinelli

Random House Children's Books

"Stargirl" embodies the very idea of magic, and Leo Borlock falls for her the first day she bursts into the hallways of Mica High. Yet her peers' initial enchantment turns into suspicion and then into hatred, forcing Leo to make difficult decisions that test his ideas about friendship. A poignant tale about daring to be different, Stargirl will make all readers look inward.

The Sign of the Beaver

Elizabeth George Speare

Random House Children's Books

In a tale of survival, twelve-year-old Matt grows beyond his years when he is left to protect the family home in the Maine wilderness by himself. Soon, he forges a surprising friendship with a Native American boy, Attean, one which makes him reflect upon what he values in life.

Number the Stars

Lois Lowry

Random House Children's Books

Set in 1943 Denmark, Annemarie Johansen's life is changed dramatically when the Nazi soldiers march through Copenhagen. Yet her character truly is tested when she has to go on a dangerous mission to save her Jewish best friend, Ellen Rosen's, life

The Hunger Games

(trilogy)

Suzanne Collins

Set in the future nation of Panem, sixteen-year-old Katniss sacrifices herself to take her sister's place in the Hunger Games. The Hunger Games, the totalitarian government's televised event in which children from the various district are pitted against one another to the death, is the ultimate test of survival. This science fiction story makes all readers question and look within themselves; what would you do in Katniss's place?